

**Town of Odessa**  
*Minutes of the*  
**TREE COMMISSION MEETING**

**Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Old Academy Building**  
**315 Main Street, Odessa, DE 19730**  
***In Person***

**Call to Order**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Commission members Michael Callaghan, Neeka Grove, Melaine Minear and Quentin Schlieder were present. Jeff Pyle was excused as he was away. A quorum was present.

**Consideration of Minutes from the December 13, 2022 Meeting**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear inquired if there were any additions or corrections to the Minutes of December 13, 2022. There being no one she entertained a motion to approve these Minutes. Commissioner Neeka Grove moved to approve the Minutes of the December 13, 2022 meeting. Commissioner Michael Callaghan seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously by voice vote.

**Recognition of Visitors**

Mayor Harvey C. Smith Jr. and Planning Commission Chairwoman Carole Coleman attended the meeting. Chairwoman Melaine Minear asked if they wished to address the Tree Commission at this time, and they indicated they did not.

**Old Business**

**Written Master Plan for Care, Preservation, Pruning, Planting, Replacing & Removal of Trees**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear inquired there any additions or corrections to the proposed 2022-2024 Odessa Tree Commission Master Plan. Secretary Quentin Schlieder noted that only Jeff Pyle had responded by the January 3, 2023 deadline as requested in Secretary Schlieder's email of December 18, 2022. He questioned whether the detail regarding the Arbor Day Ceremony was appropriate for a Master Plan. Secretary Schlieder noted that there are only three more meetings before the ceremony on April 30, 2023 and since this is the first ceremony in over a decade, he thought the detailed information was prudent. There was general consensus this information should remain.

Chairwoman Melaine Minear asked if there was any further discussion on the proposed plan. None being offered, she asked if there was a motion to adopt the proposed The 2022-2024 Odessa Tree Commission Master Plan and to forward it to the Mayor and Council for their consideration at their February 6, 2023 Council Meeting. Commissioner Michael Callaghan moved to approve The Master Plan for Care, Preservation, Pruning, Planting, Replacing & Removal of Trees and to submit the plan for the review and consideration of the Mayor and Council at their next meeting on February 6, 2023. Commissioner Neeka Grove seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously by voice vote.

### **2023 Proposed Budget**

Secretary Quentin Schlieder noted that by adopting the 2022-2024 Master Plan, the Tree Commission de facto adopted the 2023 budget on page 6 of the Plan. The 2023 proposed budget will be forwarded to the Mayor and Council for their consideration and disposition.

### **Approval of the final draft of the following brochure/flier**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear inquired if there were any additions or corrections to the “Tree Request Brochure” distributed to members at the December 13, 2022 meeting. Secretary Schlieder noted that while he did enhance the resolution of the diagram on the inside of the brochure, it still needs further work. He stated that it may be an issue with his printer, and Chairwoman Minear is purchasing a new printer and will see if her printer can improve the image. If not, the diagram will be recreated by hand.

Chairwoman Melaine Minear asked if there was further discussion, and since there was none, she entertained a motion to approve the proposed “Tree Request Brochure.” Commissioner Michael Callaghan moved to approve the “Tree Request Brochure.” Commissioner Neeka Grove seconded the motion which was subsequently approved unanimously by voice vote.

### **Tree City USA Application Status**

The application was filed with the Arbor Day Foundation with the assistance of Taryn Davidson of the Delaware Forest Service and Town Secretary Amy Ottinger via the portal set up by the Delaware Forest Service on December 26, 2022. A response whether the application has been approved is awaited. Copies of the electronic filing were distributed to members of the Commission. Chairwoman Melaine Minear noted that Ms. Ottinger had provided Tree City USA caps and pins for each member of the Commission and that she had retrieved the flags from the Town trash.

### **Dogwoods on Main Street Near Post Office**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear and Secretary Schlieder inspected the dogwood trees located in the right-of-way in front of 314 Main Street and discussed pruning them. Secretary Schlieder offered to prune them noting that there were dead limbs, crossing branches and suckers. Also, the trees should be encouraged to develop a dominant single trunk to avoid breakage in the future. Hopefully this will be accomplished in the near future. Carol Sheats has agreed to discuss this matter with Margaret Derrickson, the property owner. Mayor Smith noted that the current situation needs to be addressed as he has received minor cuts from the trees and they have also scratched his vehicle.

### **Inventory – Format**

Secretary Quentin Schlieder distributed samples of the 4” x 8” data cards he recommended be used to maintain the inventory of trees. The cards provide a dated photograph of the tree. Botanical binomial, common name, address, GIS coordinates and condition information. He noted that this approach in his opinion is the best option, given the limited technical resources available to the Town of Odessa and the Tree Commission. He added, that if in the future the technical resources are available, the information could be transferred to a digital format. He is hopeful that using a smartphone, the GIS information can be obtained. He has begun to explore the feasibility of this technique. Commissioner Michael Callaghan advised that he was familiar with the GIS technology and had a program which he thought could map the trees. Secretary Schlieder advised that he could approximate the location of the trees on New Castle County tax maps. He recommended an 11” x 17” format. Commissioner Neeka Grove advised that she might be able to assist in obtaining copies of these maps. When the weather improves, the inventory will commence.

## **New Business**

### **2023 Delaware Urban and Community Forestry Grant Proposal**

Secretary Quentin Schlieder noted that since the Delaware Forest service no longer provides grants for tree maintenance, he recommended applying for a challenge grant to underwrite the purchase of eight to ten trees to be planted in accordance with the Master Plan in the Spring and Fall of 2023. He will provide additional details at the February 14, 2023 meeting if the Tree Commission authorizes him to proceed. There was general agreement that the tree planting alternative merited consideration.

### **February 6, 2023 Town Council Presentation**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear and Secretary Quentin Schlieder are planning to attend the February 6, 2023 Odessa Council meeting to answer any questions regarding the Master Plan, brochures and other materials approved by the Commission for presentation to the Mayor and Council. Additionally, a brief 2022 year-end report will be presented on the progress the Commission made. Ordinance No. 2002-1 states that the Commission will report to the Mayor and Council in January, however, since there no longer is a January Council meeting, the presentation is deferred to February. Chairwoman Minear will request that Town Secretary Amy Ottinger include the presentation on the Council's agenda. Chairwoman Minear encouraged other members of the Commission to attend the Council meeting on February 6, 2023.

### **Solicitation of Bids for Safety Pruning at Municipal Park**

As previously noted, the Delaware Forest Service no longer provides challenge grants for the maintenance of trees. Initially, the Tree Commission had planned to submit a proposal for a grant to address public safety pruning at the Municipal Park. This work still needs to be addressed and Mayor Smith noted that some funding might be available in the municipal budget. In order to address this matter, a scope and cost of project need to be provided for the Mayor's consideration and a consultation with an arborist will be necessary to prepare a solicitation for proposal from at least three contractors. There was consensus that the Chairwoman and Secretary Schlieder should proceed in order to present the bids at the February 14, 2023 Tree Commission meeting so that a recommendation can be forwarded to the Mayor and Council at their March Council meeting. By this time, it should become clear if winter storm damage had drained the funds or if there were funds available to pursue this project. Mayor Smith did note that Delmarva Power had done some work on the trees following the tornado a few years ago.

### **NCC – Unified Development Code**

Mr. Schlieder forwarded an email to members of the Tree Commission on January 8, 2023 with Article 10 and 23 of Chapter 40 of the New Castle County Unified Development Code for discussion this evening for enhancing and clarifying the current requirements designed to enhance and maintain Odessa's Urban Forest Canopy. Chairwoman Minear reported that she had discussed this subject with Tricia Arndt, Principal Planner at State of Delaware, and she had recommended that the Town use the New Castle County Code as a template. Chairwoman Melaine Minear asked if there were any questions or comments on this information.

Commissioner Michael Callaghan suggested that Article 23 titled "Landscaping, Trees and Erosion" addressed areas of concern relevant to the Odessa Tree Commission, whereas, Chapter 10 would be more appropriately considered by the Odessa Planning Commission. Commissioner Michael Callaghan presented a copy of Chapter 10 of the Code to Planning Commission Chairwoman Carole Coleman who was attending the Tree Commission meeting.

Michael Callahan offered a motion to adopt to proceed with submitting the relevant portions of Chapter 40 Article 23 of the New Castle County Unified Development Code to the Odessa Mayor and Council and the Planning Commission and recommended that they consider adoption of Article 23. Secretary Schlieder seconded the motion. The motion was adopted with Melaine Minear, Michael Callaghan and

Quentin Schlieder voting affirmatively. Neeka Grove voted present since she is a consultant to one of the developers who might be affected by this article, and to avoid any perception of a conflict of interest. It was noted that the Tree Commission would appreciate being kept advised of the disposition of these recommendations.

#### **Other Business**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear shared a thank you note from Barbara Roberts thanking the Town and the Tree Commission for the tribute tree commemorating her years of service as Town Secretary. No other business was brought to the attention of the Commission.

#### **Next Meeting Date and Time**

Chairwoman Minear reminded the Commission that the next meeting of the Odessa Tree Commission will be held on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall. Although it is Valentine's Day, the members did not think it was necessary to reschedule the meeting.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chairwoman Melaine Minear adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m. on the motion of Commissioner Neeka Grove which was duly seconded by Commissioner Michael Callaghan and adopted unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted

Quentin C. Schlieder Jr.  
Secretary